

**Subcommittee on Resolution under section 3 of the
Dogs and Cats Ordinance (Cap 167) and
Dogs and Cats Amendment Ordinance 1997 (97 of 1997)
(Commencement) Notice 1999**

Meeting on 6 December 1999

At the meeting on 16 November 1999, Members requested additional information on dog bite cases in Hong Kong and muzzling requirements for large dogs in public places in overseas cities. The information is provided in the following paragraphs for Members' consideration.

Statistics on dog bites

2. AFD advises that of the 3 075 dog bite cases investigated in 1997/98 and 1998/99, 2 270 (i.e. 74%) were caused by owned dogs [comprising 1 662 cases (54%) involving owned and licensed dogs and 608 cases (20%) involving owned but unlicensed dogs] and only 805 cases (or 26%) were caused by stray dogs or dogs with no known keepers. Of the 1 662 owned and licensed dogs cases, 1 167 cases (i.e. 70%) involved large dogs of 20 kilograms or above (excluding fighting dogs) and 12 cases (i.e. less than 1%) involved fighting dogs.

3. As regards serious dog bites, in 1997/98 and 1998/99, there were 24 investigated cases resulting in the victims being hospitalised. Of these 24 cases, 14 cases (58%) took place in public places. Based on average weight of the breeds involved, AFD estimates that all these 14 cases were caused by large dogs, of which 11 (79%) were owned dogs [including seven (50%) licensed and four (29%) unlicensed] and three (21%) were unowned dogs.

4. The above statistics show that the majority of investigated dog bite cases involved owned dogs not stray dogs. Also of the investigated cases involving licensed dogs, bites were largely caused by large dogs weighing 20 kilograms or above. Moreover, paragraph 3 shows that more serious injuries were caused largely by large dogs. The Administration therefore considers that there is a case for imposing control measures on the "large dog" category as a preventive measure to help protect people from dog bites. The measures proposed do not endanger animal welfare.

Muzzling for large dogs in overseas cities

5. AFD has reviewed the legislation of cities in Australia, Austria, Ireland, the Mainland, New Zealand, Singapore, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA). Generally, the muzzling requirements vary amongst different cities. In Melbourne, large dogs are required to be muzzled if travelling on certain public transport. The situation is akin to that in Hong Kong where large dogs and the public sometimes share a confined space. In Sydney, fighting dogs, dangerous dogs and a specified large dog breed are required to be muzzled. In Singapore and Ireland, the muzzling requirements apply to specified large dog breeds while in New Zealand, UK and Colorado, USA, the muzzling requirements are applied to fighting dogs or declared dangerous dogs only. There are more stringent requirements in other places like Shenzhen and Vienna where all dogs are required to be muzzled in public place (except for specified areas). As regards leashing requirement, all dogs are required to be on leash in public places (except for specified areas) in Sydney and Vienna. Details of the information are summarised at the Annex.

6. The proposed muzzling control in Hong Kong is moderate as compared to places like Shenzhen and Vienna and would not compromise animal welfare. Given the crowded living environment in Hong Kong, the Administration considers the proposed muzzling requirement reasonable. Nevertheless, we are prepared to consider any suggestions from Members in this regard.

Economic Services Bureau /
Agriculture and Fisheries Department

3 December 1999

**Leashing and Muzzling Requirements on Dogs
in Public Places in Other Cities/Countries**

Place	Control on fighting dogs	Control on dangerous dogs	Control on specified breeds	Other controls
Melbourne, Australia		Leash and muzzle for declared dangerous dogs	Leash and muzzle for Greyhounds	Large dogs on trains must be muzzled. No dogs allowed to be at large.
Sydney, Australia	Leash and muzzle for fighting dogs (breeds covered same as the proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation)	Leash and muzzle for declared dangerous dogs	Leash and muzzle for Greyhounds	All dogs must be on a leash in public places (except for specified areas)
Vienna, Austria				All dogs must be on leash and muzzled in public places (except for specified areas)
Ireland	Leash and muzzle for Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa. Person in control of dogs of specified breeds must be over 16 years of age.		Leash and muzzle for 10 other specified breeds (all large breeds). Person in control of dogs of specified breeds must be over 16 years of age.	
Shenzhen, Mainland				All dogs must be muzzled in public place.
New Zealand		Muzzle for declared dangerous dogs and not allowed to be at large.		

Place	Control on fighting dogs	Control on dangerous dogs	Control on specified breeds	Other controls
Singapore	Leash and muzzle for fighting dogs (breeds covered similar to the proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation)		Leash and muzzle for six large dog breeds (including German Shepherd, Rottweiler, Doberman and others).	
United Kingdom	Leash and muzzle for fighting dogs (breeds covered same as the proposed Dangerous Dogs Regulation) Leashing must be by a person over 16 years of age.			
Colorado, USA		Leash and muzzle for dangerous dogs Muzzling requirement for dangerous dogs only applies after second serious bite.		